INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRONOLOGY OF JOHN FRANCIS McCORMACK, - HIS LIFE AND CAREER

by Doreen McFarlane with valuable earlier material from Paul Worth

The following chronology of the life and career of John McCormack has been compiled from documents and other evidence collected over three decades by many McCormack scholars. As Paul Worth initially put it together, he commented that it was a work in progress, with many "gaps to be filled in." This proved to be true. With the gathering of thousands of news articles by **Jack Keveny** of New Jersey, I have been able to add numerous dates and details to this document. It remains, however, a work in progress, as it is hardly possible to trace every move McCormack made, or even every concert he gave. Still, it is hoped that this "filled in" version of the chronology will be enlightening as to his musical activities, in addition to many of his important life events. An overview of this chronology offers the reader an impression of a superbly talented, very busy, and extremely generous man. The number of benefit concerts he gave is outstanding. The numbers of people who attended are unequaled.

Worth pointed out the following: "The earliest drafts of this chronology were based on the standard references and his own files as well as substantial infusions of documents and other information from four primary contributors: The first of these sources was the set of Newsletters of the John McCormack Society of America and the encyclopedic knowledge of its editor, the late **Peter Dolan**, who contributed much else besides, in the many years since that newsletter was (sadly) discontinued. Second to Peter's contributions were those of an English counterpart, **Fred Grundy**, the other McCormack scholar whose knowledge may be justly described as encyclopedic. In more recent years the contributions of **Kevin McBeath**, son of (violinist) Donald McBeath, McCormack's Assisting Artist during most of the first decade of his American career, provided an unbelievable wealth of information about McCormack's concert tours during these years. The ongoing research of **John Ward** has been the primary source for information documenting McCormack's early career and his appearances in the UK and Ireland, and that of **John Scarry** in the US has been vital as well."

A great many other scholars and researchers also made significant contributions. Unfortunately, Paul Worth had not compiled that complete list, so we are, sadly, unable to include it. To each who added information, your contributions are profoundly appreciated. Worth noted that his own research was largely carried out in the libraries at the University of Texas at Austin and at Burns Library at Boston College.

Paul Worth added *"This chronology as it stands thus represents a synthesis of the combined work of many.* Many more pieces of documentation collected by other McCormack afficionados, whose names are unknown to the editor or have been inadvertently omitted, made their way to my desk, and this assistance is also gratefully recognized." Needless to say, I concur.

The organization and stylistic features of this chronology are those of Paul Worth. He pointed out that, "while most chronologies of singers of the golden age focus on operatic appearances and typically give lesser emphasis to concert and recital dates, McCormack shaped his career

around the latter and appeared in opera relatively infrequently after 1914. He also broadcast on radio beginning in 1925 and quite frequently from 1933 on. The several biographies of McCormack often fail to make clear, and in some instances obscure, the actual dates or chronological sequence of the events which the authors recount. For these reasons it therefore seemed helpful that this chronology depart from the conventional format that is typically used for chronologies of McCormack's operatic contemporaries, and that it include basic details of recital and concert engagements, as well as other entries intended to serve the purposes of both music historians and biographers.

In his non-operatic appearances in Ireland, Britain, and the United States from the early years through about 1913, McCormack was virtually always one performer among several (not counting accompanists) at the event. Where this is known to be the case, it is listed as a "Concert," i.e., an appearance with other singers or with a symphony orchestra.

From about 1914 on McCormack most often appeared in recital with only his accompanist and one "Assisting Artist," usually a violinist or cellist who was a member of his entourage, who played two or three short sets as interludes between McCormack's groups of songs. This pattern is described as a "Recital." In many recitals during the last third of his active career McCormack began to use pianists as Assisting Artists. For some of these recitals Schneider both accompanied and assisted with piano solos."

John McCormack Chronology - KEY

Musical Event Key: each line:
date, event, city (venue), accompanist / assisting instrumentalist / assisting singer,
(source #), comment

Event:
opera
recital
concert
gala
"Grand Concert"

abbreviations
RLS Robinson-Locke
w/VAA with various assisting artists
tr JMS-US transcribed by members of JMS USA
BP benefit performance
enc.k. encores known
enc.unk.
GP Gala Performance

Accompanists:

VO	Vincent O'Brien
ES	Edwin Schneider
LS	Ludwig Schwab
GM	Gerald Moore

SC	Spencer Clay
LR	Landon Ronald
JL	John Larchet
SL	Samuel Liddle
PK	Percy Kahn
JS	Joseph Saxby

Assisting Instrumentalists:

DM	Donald McBeath, violin
AP	Andre Polah, violin
RB	Rudolph Bochco, violin
AB	Alfred Boyington, violin
LK	Lauri Kennedy, cello
JL	James Liebling, cello
EW	Eleanor Warren,
AS	Ada Sassoli, harp
RG	Rudolph Ganz, piano
HD	Henri Deering, piano
VV	Vita Vronsky, piano
AD	Ania Dorfmann, piano
BH	Betty Humby, piano
CoB	Clare O'Bierne, piano
JT	Joan Trimble, piano
AG	Arnold Grier, organ

Assisting Singers:

LT	Luisa Tetrazzini
CM	Charlotte Maconda
MN	Marie Narelle
NT	Namara-Toye
AP	Alice Preston
MH	May Huxley
SB	Sara Buckley, contralto
DS	Dale Smith, baritone
RI	Robert Irwin baritone
var.	"various" (as at Gala performances, early Harrison Tours, etc.)

Conductors:

HW	Henry Wood
LR	Landon Ronald
JS	Josef Stransky

Cities/Venues:

Athlone, FM	Father Mathew Hall
Dublin, TR	Theatre Royal
London, QH	Queen's Hall
London, AH	Albert Hall
London, CG	Covent Garden
London (DL)	London, Drury Lane
NYC (H)	New York City, Hippodrome
NYC (CH)	New York City, Carnegie Hall

NYC (TH)	New York City, Town Hall
NYC (CT)	New York City, Century Theater
Brooklyn (BAM)	Academy of Music
Boston (SH)	Symphony Hall
Chicago (OH)	Orchestra Hall
Buffalo (EH)	Elmwood Hall
Philadelphia	